Re: Welcome to Week Three of the On-line Seminar

Ronda Hauben (*rh120@columbia.edu*)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 08:04:32 –0400 (EDT)

Responding to: thibbs@k12.colostate.edu (Tom Hibbs)

>Don't compete with private resources, but provide money to buy from those
>resources. Then we will actually
>generate universal services. The grants should include a "real" resource
>for support!

Something seems very wrong with this as a model. The home telephone
user (previously those who had to have low rates available to be
able to make a system of universal service function) now are being
asked to bear the cost on their home phone bills of subsidizing
free or low cost access for schools, libraries, and other non profit
corporations so that these entities can buy from private companies.

Instead of the private sector having any social obligations they
are to be subsidized by the public sector and the cost is to
be born by the home phone user which leads to the destruction of
what is in reality universal service.

All these gifts to the private sector are just public subsidy of
the private sector, which shows it in fact isn't so private
after all.

Instead it is public financial support of those with no public obligation,
and thus a drain on the whole society.

That is why the model of a regulated AT&T was something that worked,
as opposed to taking off the regulation but giving financial subsidies to
private companies who can do what they want but have a financial
interest in promoting privatization and advertising, and all sorts
of commercial ventures.

Isn't this what the new telecommunications act, passed without any
public comment, sets up.

Doesn't there need to be an online public hearing sponsored by
the FCC of home users, ie of those for whom the loss of universal
service is an issue?

To have this online seminar claiming to be about universal service,
but which substitutes home phone users subsidizing schools and libraries
etc. without an open online hearing (without any moderator) on the
real issue of universal service meaning providing the same low cost
POTS around the U.S. -- is to leave the FCC rulemaking proceedure

process without the input of those for whom universal service (and
its loss) is most important.

[Moderator's Note: The present seminar is on the topic of Universal
Service subsidies for schools and libraries, as defined in the current
Telecommunications Act. I hope this point is clear in the material
on the seminar's Web site.]

And it is no surprise that we are being presented with various manner
and means to have the FCC write rules that will subsidize the commercial
sector in various ways and take away universal service from the home
user, by encouraging schools and libraries to help carry out the
change.

It is crucial that there be a means of maintaining POTS and of
having the commercial sector subsidize school and library
and home use, rather than talking of bringing subsidies to the
private sector.

Ronda
rh120@columbia.edu

                 Amateur Computerist vol 7 no 1
                    Netizens and Online Access
articles about the history of Cleveland Freenet, Canadian Community Networking
Access for All from Germany etc   write for free copy ronda@umcc.umich.edu

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- **Next message:** <u>Marty Tennant: "Re: Free Email"</u>
- **Previous message:** <u>Ronda Hauben: "Re: Free Email"</u>

Re: Free Email

Marty Tennant (marty@sccoast.net)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 08:07:06 –0700

```
Ronda Hauben wrote:
> To encourage subsidizing such advertising by promoting its use
> and recommending advertising be put into schools and libraries
> shows the problems that develop when there aren't public principles
> guiding public policy.

Rhonda,

I had my suspicions about this too, but after actually SEEING
the way JUNO placed their ads on screen, it became a non-issue.

Advertising, whether you like it or not, is part of our society.
I can't even watch PBS without seeing a little of it.

At least in JUNO's case, they are trying to fit the ad to the
person using the service via profiling.  I'm sure this sets off
a lot of bells too, but I'd much rather live in a world where
the advertisers that are subsidizing the content treat me like
a real human being with preferences, rather than just another
consumer.

For more on advertising and digital infrastructure, see Nicholas
Negroponte's latest submission on the last page of this month's
WIRED magazine.

Marty Tennant
```

Re: bona fide request?

Jan Van Dam (*Jan.VanDam@Oakland.k12.mi.us*)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 08:33:19 –0400

```
On 9.13.96 Ken Hammer asked....

><>How should one define a <i>bona fide</i> request for telecommunications
>services?  What minimal justifications should a school, library or
>school district have to offer in support of such a request?
>
>For those telcom rate discounts which I support, the only criteria
>should be the presentation of an IRS qualification as a tax-exempt
>non-profit by reason of educational activity.
>
>--
>--------------------------------------------------------------
>K.F.Hammer Associates                         Ken Hammer
>management consultations       St. Johnsbury, VT  05819
>--------------------------------------------------------------
>
```

I would strongly argue that ANY request from an educational institution
should be honored. The tax-exempt qualification is fine, but I don't think
that is the question being asked by the FCC. They may be more concerned
with what is a BONA FIDE REQUEST, not who is a BONA FIDE agency to make a
request. In conversation with FCC representative this past summer, this
seemed to be their focus, the "content of the request", not the
"requestor."

If I interpreted correctly, then all requests from educational agencies for
any type of voice, video or data service should be considered bona fide.
Any other approach infers a structure at some level, probably a state
level, to filter and evaluate the requests. I would not endorse that
approach. State agencies have enough to do without checking local
educational requests for electronic services.

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Dr. Jan Van Dam
Oakland Schools
School Support Services
(810) 858-1885 voice
(810) 858-2108 fax
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State approved technology plans

Jan Bolluyt (*jbolluyt@spirit-lake.k12.ia.us*)
Sun, 15 Sep 1996 23:11:11 -0500

I disagree with Ken Hammer on one point, the state approved technology plans.

The plan is not for the state, but for the library or district. Many of us
do not have the expertise to know what is available, and will naturally look
at other plans to copy, but is that so bad? This idea is bad only if the
state imposes its expectations on the plan and makes us clone "the best".

A mandated plan is a necessity to get everyone thinking about the goals that
this universal service can help us meet. If we are unable, or do feel the
time is well spent, then perhaps universal service is not needed at this time.

Jan

RE: New Wireless Technologies –Reply

TOSTADO RICARDO (*RTOSTADO@chi.isbe.state.il.us*)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 11:37:00 –0500

RE Wireless:

Like any new technology, there are risks and bugs that need to be to be
addressed to push forward...

(I suspect people 60 years ago believed the same thing about rotary dial
phones.)

I invite folks to call one of our school districts (Crab Orchard in rural,
Southern IL - 618/438-9711) who have come together with Hughes to try a
new asynch technology for Internet access. The initial word is very
promising.

Is it the end-all, cure-all? In its current form, probably not, but Hughes
and Crab Orchard are working to make sure that the technology is viable --
kudos to both.
(By the way, this is a great lesson to teach our kids: not everything in
life is "turn-key", you've got to work to get the benefits.)

Bottom line is that the partnership offers an opportunity for access in
areas where traditional telco rates are high, and helps push developing new
technologies in new markets -- a win-win -- not flawless, but a big leap
forward. Many times, even the threat of a wireless option makes the telco's
react positively -- real-life examples will work even better.

I suspect there are other folks out there with similar stories on wireless.

Cutting new paths does not come without some pain, and my read is that many
folks are so risk-averse that they shy away from opportunities.   I
understand the pressures that education decision-makers face from Boards,
Parents, and others to come up with sure-fire, low-cost solutions -- however
 -- HAIL THE PIONEERS!!!

Ricardo Tostado
Learning Technologies
Illinois State Board of Education
312/814-3228

Re: State approved technology plans

Rex Buddenberg (*budden@nps.navy.mil*)
Mon, 16 Sep 96 11:47:42 -0700

```
>
> The plan is not for the state, but for the library or district.

Agree.  And in parallel, the state and feds should not be attaching
strings to the Universal Service $ pots either... for the same reasons.


 Many of us
> do not have the expertise to know what is available, and will naturally look
> at other plans to copy, but is that so bad?

I've seen some of the 'technology plans' in the K12 schools around here.
Calling them 'plans' is using the term extremely generously.   ... ok,
I'll grant that a couple of them looked pretty, done up on colored
paper and put in a nice binder.

But they lack:
        1.  A coherent notion of what a complete system looks like.
Akin to specifying the hubcaps and saying nothing about the drive
train on a car.
        2.  There's no sense of life cycle costs.  The most egregious
habitual omission is:
                a.  tech training
                b.  general literacy training.
These two items make up about 2/3 of the life cycle costs
of a typical network.
        3.  If this stuff is so expensive, then why are we doing it?
(I think the Ca K12 tech plans are mandated by the state, but that's
not the right reason to plan;-).

b
```

Re: Required technology plans?

Dennis Small (*dsmall@inspire.ospi.wednet.edu*)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 12:47:25 –0700 (PDT)

Fellow Universal Service ponderers:

As this is my first time to weigh in with $.02 worth, a brief intro:
my name is Dennis Small, and I work for the WA state Office of
Superintendent of Public Instruction (our Dept.of Education) in the
educational use of telecommunications. I have found the discussion thus
far interesting/helpful/overwhelming, and appreciate the work many have
done to make this forum possible! And now for an opinion:

"Should school districts have to complete state-approved technology plans
in order to qualify for Universal Service subsidies?"

I feel that districts should be required to have a technology plan that
addresses many of the issues that have been raised here (staff
development, curriculum integration, etc). Perhaps a "checklist" or
list of "milestones" could be developed to have an "approved plan"
(whether by the state or some other entity) that kept paperwork to a
minimum while ensuring that the important issues that are needed for
successful use of telecommunications have been addressed. The balance
point here, it seems to me, is to make sure that the "investment" of reduced
connectivity costs will indeed be used wisely, without stifling local
creativity and decision-making......
```
****************************************************************
*      Dennis Small, Educational Telecommunications Supervisor      *
*    OSPI, Old Capitol Bldg, PO BOX 47200, Olympia, WA 98504-7200   *
*  Phone: (360) 664-3111    TDD (360) 664-3461 . FAX: (360) 586-3894 *
*  WWW: http://www.ospi.wednet.edu  Gopher: inspire.ospi.wednet.edu  *
****************************************************************
```

Re: Re: Professional Development -- comments on comments

Brenda Williams (*Brenda_Williams@kcpt.org*)
16 Sep 1996 15:07:09 GMT

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Mario Zinga,zinga@pps.pgh.pa.us,uucp writes:
The K12 environment is not the same as the
university. Most teachers are responsible for 120 students a day. The
number of computers with Internet access is small.
```

Not only do teachers have at least 120 students a day, their duties include grading the papers for all of those, in some schools doing the paperwork that secretaries used to do or lunchroom cashiers, doing the testing and often even the counseling that should be done by counselors, being a parent for younger students who have negative home lives, and then rushing to lunchroom and playground duties, etc. They do not have 3 months off in the summer because they are catching up and then preparing for the next school year because there is little creative time when the year starts. There is a major difference between K-12 and university instructors.

Perhaps, students of university instructors could develop materials as projects in collaboration with local schools and help train local school teachers/students in Internet access. The scope of dollars from Universal Service must be somewhat limited to be affordable--the outside and inside connections are more suitable to the scope we can hope for being provided.

Re: Community infostructure

Brenda Williams (*Brenda_Williams@kcpt.org*)
16 Sep 1996 15:22:08 GMT

Frank Odasz,franko@bigsky.dillon.mt.us,uucp writes:
Effective citizen engagement in lifelong learning and
purposeful public problem solving, that improves lives, is a key
issue. We need ongoing evaluative metrics to measure what's
really happening after connectivity is made available. Caring and
connectivity are two related types of bandwidth which must
interact with common sense.

"Caring and connectivity are two related types of bandwidth which must
interact with common sense!!!" Fantastic statement. Add to those two "caring
and connectivity" the best of communications among community personnel who
express their caring to all ages and ability levels, and money would no
longer be the issue--it would be "What's best for the community to grow and
develop the potential of each citizen--young and old--for a successful,
productive future."

Re: New Wireless Technologies –Reply

Sam Simon (*ssimon@idi.net*)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 18:07:06 –0700

There is a wireless solution available now that isn't really
experimental. It is called Ricochet and is a product of Metricom (who
is one of our clients, for purpose of disclosure). There is information
at www.ricochet.net.

There are just rolling out, and are available in San Francisco, Seattle
and are about to launch in the DC area.

They have put early service on college campuses, because of their local
enviornment and it helped get students on the net easily.

Ricochet is a proprietary network, but it is NOT experimental, and
takes very little user sophistication. The stand alone rates for modem
and unlimited interconnection to the net are comprobable to internet
alone service, and I am sure that for schools there wold be some sort of
volume arrangement.

It seems to me that wireless technology is an excellent option to hard
wiring older buildings with lots of construction problems.

Also, in light of the President's campaign promise to launch anational
effort to rebuild many buildings, wireless might also be an interim
solution for b uildings that might be replaced in five years or so.

Sam
--

Samuel A. Simon
President
Issue Dynamics, Inc.
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Washington DC 20005
http://idi.net   202-408-1400(v); 202-408-1134(fax)

Week Four Assignments

Kevin Conde (*KevinC@sutter.k12.ca.us*)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 15:31:46 -0700

The question asked for week four was "How can schools and libraries share
services with each other and with other community groups? How can these
activities be structured so as to foster competition among
telecommunications providers?"

I'm a Technology Coordinator for a county with several small rural school
districts, and these questions go to the heart of why most of our districts
don't have dedicated connections to the internet.

None of these school districts are affluent, yet all have managed to provide
some computers in the classrooms. What they can't afford to provide, even
if it were avialable, is a digital connection, i.e., Frame Relay, to connect
to the internet at an acceptable band width.

We are already sharing services. There are several hub locations, I'm one,
that small schools can connect to, and share my connection to the internet,
if the cost of the frame relay connections were affordable. A 128K frame
relay connection costs us roughly $350.00 per month. Most small schools can
not justify that kind of cost. A 56K connection costs $125.00, however, 56k
is simply not enough bandwidth for multiple computers in multiple classrooms.
And those costs are in addition to what those districts would have to pay me
to help offset my even higher datacomm costs, made necessary by the even
higher bandwidth I require to support attachments by multiple sites.

Bottom line – data comm costs must be reduced in order to make them viable
for small rural schools. This leads directly into the competition question.

Basically there is no competition for rural schools, or for any of our
schools that I'm aware of. The only datacomm vendor we have is Pacific
Bell! One vendor equals no competition which equals high costs and little
incentive for the vendor to add services that will not pay for themselves.

Although the act provides for more competition, a key to success will be
encouraging commercial datacomm vendors to enter into competition in
markets, i.e., rural areas, were profit margins are very slim.

I know what we need, but I'm not sure what the answers are.

Kevin
Kevin Conde
Technology Coordinator
Sutter County Superintendent of Schools Office
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KevinC@sutter.k12.ca.us
http://www.sutter.k12.ca.us

- **Next message:** Bill Cosh: "Mandated Plans"
- **Previous message:** Sam Simon: "Re: New Wireless Technologies –Reply"
- **Next in thread:** Betty Dawn Hamilton: "Re: Week Four Assignments"

Mandated Plans

Bill Cosh (*bcosh@wasb.org*)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 20:20:09 –0700

Jan Bolluyt wrote:

"A mandated plan is necessary to get everyone thinking about the goals that this universal service can help us meet."

I just wanted to offer another perspective on mandated plans. I have also seen situations where schools have developed community based technology committees (10-20 people). Everyone is excited about planning for technology, everyone puts a lot of work and effort into developing the plan. Only later do they realize that under revenue caps their school needs to cut $100,000's from its budget, and has no money for technology. There they sit, with all of their hard work, and great plans, and no way to implement them.

If technology plans were mandated, I think this type of situation would only be increased even more.

Wisconsin is a state that has operated on the "mandate" approach for decates. I have a publication that we produce on school law that is over a foot high, most of it mandates. Other types of plans have been mandated in Wisconsin. For example, every school district in the state has a gifted and talented plan. When the Department of Public Instruction's auditors show up, the district takes the plan off the shelf, dusts it off and proves to the state that the mandate has been met. But that doesn't mean a lot has been done to help kids.

There is a better way!!!! Mandating technology plans will not work.

Bill Cosh
Wisconsin Association of School Boards

Welcome to Week Four of the US/ND On-line Seminar

Bob Carlitz (*bob@info-ren.pitt.edu*)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 21:21:56 -0400 (EDT)

Those of you who maintain bookmark entries for
        http://info-ren.pitt.edu/universal-service/this-week.html
may already have seen the notes for this week's activities in
the Universal Service/Network Democracy seminar.

Here is a table of contents:
        Summary of the Third Week of the Seminar
        New Developments in the Seminar
        Remaining Topics to Discuss
        Aggregation and Competition
        Assignments

Some items which may be of interest include:
        Results of the on-line survey on the scope of Universal Service
                subsidies
        Highlights from discussions in Week Three
        Information on a new survey
        This week's topic

The principal topic for this week's discussion has to do with the
aggregation of services and the role of competition:

        + How can schools and libraries share services with each other and with
        other community groups?

        + How can these activities be structured so as to foster competition
        among telecommunications providers?

Several specific questions are raised in these notes:

        * What examples exist of effective community collaborations?

        * Does the Telecommunications Act promote such collaborations or
        endanger them?

        * How can an enhanced competitive environment help schools and
        libraries? Are there new services likely to result? Is dramatic
        price competition likely to occur?

        * What structures exist to facilitate needed community collaborations
        in the development of telecommunications infrastructure? Is this
        activity typically driven by school districts, municipal
        governments, community groups, libraries or other organizations?

The assignments for the current week continue the pattern established
last week:

> * Summaries and other library submissions

> * Postings to the on-line discussion

> * New on-line survey on the allocation of Universal Service
> subsidies.

Thanks for your continued participation.

Bob Carlitz
Moderator

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new survey on allocation of Universal Service subsidies

Bob Carlitz (*bob@info-ren.pitt.edu*)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 23:01:29 -0400 (EDT)

There's a new survey accessible from the Universal Service/Network
Democracy home page - or directly at
        http://info-ren.pitt.edu/universal-service/survey_2.html

This survey deals with questions on the allocation of Universal
Service subsidies as discussed last week. There are four questions on
the survey:

  1. Mechanisms: What mechanism should be used to provide Universal Service
  subsidies to schools and libraries?

  2. Bona Fide Requests: What minimal justifications should a school, library
  or school district be required to offer in support of requests for
  subsidized telecommunications services?

  3. Extent: Should Universal Service subsidies extend to groups which
  provide educational materials or support for educational organizations,
  such as universities and colleges or community centers?

  4. Equity: How can the Universal Service Fund insure equity of access for
  all schools and libraries?

Please take the few minutes it requires to complete the survey. This
is an easy way to make your views known to other seminar participants -
and to the FCC and the Federal/State Joint Board. The reply options
listed on the survey have been taken from alternatives listed in comments
submitted to the FCC and from ideas that have been raised in our on-line
seminar.

Results of the previous survey on the scope of Universal Service
subsidies are now available on-line. Please look for a pointer on the
Universal Service/Network Democracy home page or go directly to the
survey page -
        http://info-ren.pitt.edu/universal-service/surveys.html

Thanks for your participation in this aspect of the on-line seminar.

Bob Carlitz
Moderator

Re: new survey on allocation of Universal Service subsidies

Richard Buro – Temple ISD (*rwburo@tenet.edu*)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 22:56:43 –0500 (CDT)

On Mon, 16 Sep 1996, Bob Carlitz wrote:

> There's a new survey accessible from the Universal Service/Network
> Democracy home page – or directly at
>   http://info-ren.pitt.edu/universal-service/survey_2.html
>
> This survey deals with questions on the allocation of Universal
> Service subsidies as discussed last week. There are four questions on
> the survey:
>
>   1. Mechanisms: What mechanism should be used to provide Universal Service
>   subsidies to schools and libraries?

It really doesn't matter what stream the funding flows through, if
government is going to get involved, a bureaucracy will surely develop.
That needs to be avoided, if at all possible. Still there needs to be a
mechanism to allocate funding. Perhaps block grants to States –– but if
it is to provide truly Universal Service, then the money needs to be
divided out amongst all the participating entities –– schools, libraries,
etc.

>   2. Bona Fide Requests: What minimal justifications should a school, library
>   or school district be required to offer in support of requests for
>   subsidized telecommunications services?

I believe that a viable, standards based LAN must be a prerequisite for
any broader infusion of funds for Internet access. Additionally, a
commitment to sustain the project beyond the life of a grant –– a long
term commitment to the personnel, training, and support that will be
required is also essential. A commitment must also be made to make the
connection point accessible to the largest population possilbe –– either
via remote access, local provider support, LANs, WANs, MANs or what have you.

>   3. Extent: Should Universal Service subsidies extend to groups which
>   provide educational materials or support for educational organizations,
>   such as universities and colleges or community centers?

Perhaps, but only in so far as it supports the target population and overall efforts to achieve Universal Service. Many colleges and universities are using their resources solely for themselves -- yet several are branching out in partnerships and collaboratives to work with public and private schools. The incentive to continue these partnerships should be additional funding or some means of making it lucrative for the colleges and universities to support these initiatives.

> 4. Equity: How can the Universal Service Fund insure equity of access for
> all schools and libraries?

The fund cannot ensure Universal Service unless that is an up front commitment. Until the most remote rural group has access, the provisions for Universal Service will not be realized. Priority should be given to unserved populations first, underserved populations second, and then to suburban and urban areas where services are more widespread.
Hope these comments help generate some discussion.

```
----------------------------------------------------------------
Richard Buro, Master TENet Facilitator/Mentor  INTERNET: rwburo@tenet.edu
Coordinator of Instructional Media                VOICE:    817-791-6156
Temple ISD, 300 South 27th, Temple, TX 76504   FAX:      817-791-6100
Moderator: tenet.interest.videomakers   Computer based FAX: 817-791-6158
         : tenet.interest.txstudies               NIGHT:    817-778-0386
         : tenet.taet.memberinfo                 Remember Apollo 1.
         : tenet.projects.nasa-iliad             Remember the Challenger 7.
----------------------------------------------------------------
```

- **Next message:** Cheryl Lemke: "Re: Mandated Plans"
- **Previous message:** Bob Carlitz: "new survey on allocation of Universal Service subsidies"
- **In reply to:** Bob Carlitz: "new survey on allocation of Universal Service subsidies"
- **Next in thread:** John Rademan: "Re: new survey on allocation of Universal Service subsidies"

Re: Mandated Plans

Cheryl Lemke (*clemke@mail.isbe.state.il.us*)
Mon, 16 Sep 1996 23:17:14 -0500

And yet another state official commenting on mandated plans...

First an introduction...Cheryl Lemke... I work for the Illinois State
Board of Education in the area of Learning Technologies...

And a story... this year we granted learning technology funds to 36 of
the poorest school districts in the state (a small step toward closing
the information gap). We provided a one-page list of 11 expectations
for the plan and a very progressive, stimulating, commununity-based
planning process in which we supported 6-member team participation from
the 36 schools/communities. The "catch" was... "come through our
process, involve your community, get your plan 'approved' by a jury of
your peers (according to a rubric based on our 11 expections) and the
money is yours.

As you might expect, districts COMPLAINED, but complied... The majority
of superintedents later apologized for the complaints saying... "I had
no idea of the scope, hope and POSSIBILITIES technology could bring my
school and community." In essence they said..."I didn't know what I
didn't know." AND their testimonials a year later reiterate the
importance of the state role in "building their capacity to make wise
local decisions based on those 11 expectations and their surprise as to
what lengths their communities will go to support and invest in a shared
vision."

In summary... that capacity building is extremely important... and the
assurance that schools enjoying these reduced rates will thoughtfully
use such access to improve learning. Otherwise, I am afraid that in the
near future the media will focus on our failure to sustain, grow and
capitalize on telecommunications to the benefit of our learners and our
communities in general. We all know this is not about boxes and
wires...

Maybe the answer is a common-sense, community-based technology plan
which is required but the Hammer isn't the state. Instead, a
peer-review/moderation process is implemented to assure districts of
a nod... while enabling reviewers and reviewees the opportunity to
share, discuss, debate and exchange ideas... Learning all the while...

Bill Cosh wrote:
>
> Jan Bolluyt wrote:
>

> "A mandated plan is necessary to get everyone thinking about the goals
> that this universal service can help us meet."
>
> I just wanted to offer another perspective on mandated plans. I have
> also seen situations where schools have developed community based
> technology committees (10-20 people). Everyone is excited about planning
> for technology, everyone puts a lot of work and effort into developing
> the plan. Only later do they realize that under revenue caps their
> school needs to cut $100,000's from its budget, and has no money for
> technology. There they sit, with all of their hard work, and great
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> decates. I have a publication that we produce on school law that is over
> a foot high, most of it mandates. Other types of plans have been
> mandated in Wisconsin. For example, every school district in the state
> has a gifted and talented plan. When the Department of Public
> Instruction's auditors show up, the district takes the plan off the
> shelf, dusts it off and proves to the state that the mandate has been
> met. But that doesn't mean a lot has been done to help kids.
>
> There is a better way!!!! Mandating technology plans will not work.
>
> Bill Cosh
> Wisconsin Association of School Boards

Re: Week Four Assignments

Betty Dawn Hamilton (*bhamilt@tenet.edu*)
Tue, 17 Sep 1996 05:58:02 –0500 (CDT)

On Mon, 16 Sep 1996, Kevin Conde wrote:

> The question asked for week four was "How can schools and libraries share
> services with each other and with other community groups? How can these
> activities be structured so as to foster competition among
> telecommunications providers?"

Kevin, your response to this question is correct. Coming from a rural
community myself, I understand the problems of collaboration. I am in the
largest school district in a county having 4 districts. (Two will
consolidate next year, I think.) Our community now has direct dial to
Lubbock, 40 miles away, but going through a commercial provider is still
costly and not all of the districts are in local–dial area for Lubbock.

One of the major problems I see is in personnel. I understand that to have
a viable direct connect that will allow the small schools in this area to
share a connection, the community/school/consortium must hire a full time
person to oversee the connection hardware and software and everything
that goes with it. There is no way a person with a teaching load (or full
time school library operation, for that matter) could do that, even if
one had the expertise.

Each time I have approached my school with ideas (one was about 4 years
ago when there were some $150,000 grants made available –– ABC/CLIO?) to
schools for technology. I asked about a television studio/distance
learning connection (we already had a satellite and an ideal place to
build the control room and studio). My district was interested until they
decided we would have to hire a person to run it.

Now, as we explore a direct connection, I see the same problem. We need a
full time *knowledgeable* person to keep everything operating smoothly,
and I just don't see many small school districts shelling out salaries
that would attract computer/connectivity experts. I have thought that
perhaps the city/county governments could perhaps share with the schools
in the salary of such a person, but the red tape for setting up such a
personnel unit boggles the mind when you consider the benefits packages,
etc. Also, I don't know how such a person would operate if he/she had *3*
"bosses" (each entity –– not individuals, necessarily) who are very
"territorial" in their thinking and who might not understand the needs and
operating procedures of each other.

That last statement is not being critical of my local governments/schools;
it's just a fact. I'm sure such collaboration would be somewhat of a
problem *anywhere*, not just in my locale.

Add the salaried person issue to those of physical connectivity and staff development, and the proposition gets more expensive.

Betty

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- **Next message:** Tom Buckley: "State's Responsibilty for Technology Provisioning"
- **Previous message:** Cheryl Lemke: "Re: Mandated Plans"
- **In reply to:** Kevin Conde: "Week Four Assignments"
- **Next in thread:** Kevin Conde: "Re: Week Four Assignments"

(no subject)

Jayne & Scott Hoffman (*jayneh@cia–g.com*)
Tue, 17 Sep 1996 06:16:04 –0600 (MDT)

Bill Cosh, Wisconsin reported these survey results:

>Number of High Schools With Direct Internet Access: 109 high schools,
25.1%

Is it possible that universal access is only going to help those with
existing techonolgy?

>Number of High Schools That Pay Long Distance Phone Charges to Access
The Internet: 56 high schools, 12.9%

Maybe those schools with the existing technology don't need help with the
access charges as much as the FCC believes.

>Number of High Schools With Technology Plans: 399 high schools, 91.7%

Techonolgy plans don't seem to encourage technology. Yet, personally, I
will argue that schools need access to technology expertise. Most do not
know what is available or how to use it. I have seen two districts spend
money on soft/hardware that was either useless, didn't work or was
horrendously inadequate. What schools really need is the expertise of an IS
officer, but they cannot afford one.

>Barriers:
>Cost/Money/Revenue Caps - 81 responses
Long Distance Call Charges - 17 responses
Need To Establish a Policy - 11 responses

It appears that the biggest problem facing schools is not access; it's
equipment. I am more certain that Universal access is unecessary
legislation which will only drive up costs for more traditional phone
service. This is not the way to solve the problem; it's a bandaid on a
knee that isn't scraped.

If we truly want more schools to have access, we need to provide them with
equipment.

Several years ago Channel 1 came to schools and sold districts on their new
medium. If they had only offered the satellite news service, it would have
been useless because no school had the televisions, satellites, or other
equipment. If that same company had only provided the satellite feed and
the recording equipment, it would have still been useless to most schools.
This is analgous to Universal Access in that telecos can provide the "feed,"